

Program Report Spring 2015 for Wappinger's Alternative High School

Introduction

Michael Arterberry, the Founder and Executive Director of the Youth Voices Center, Inc., a non-profit organization which has the sole purpose of improving the lives of young people, is also the creator of the Power of Peace program. The Power of Peace program was introduced to Westchester County, NY and surrounding areas in 2005. The results of the Power of Peace program for 2015 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in one cycle during the month of January.

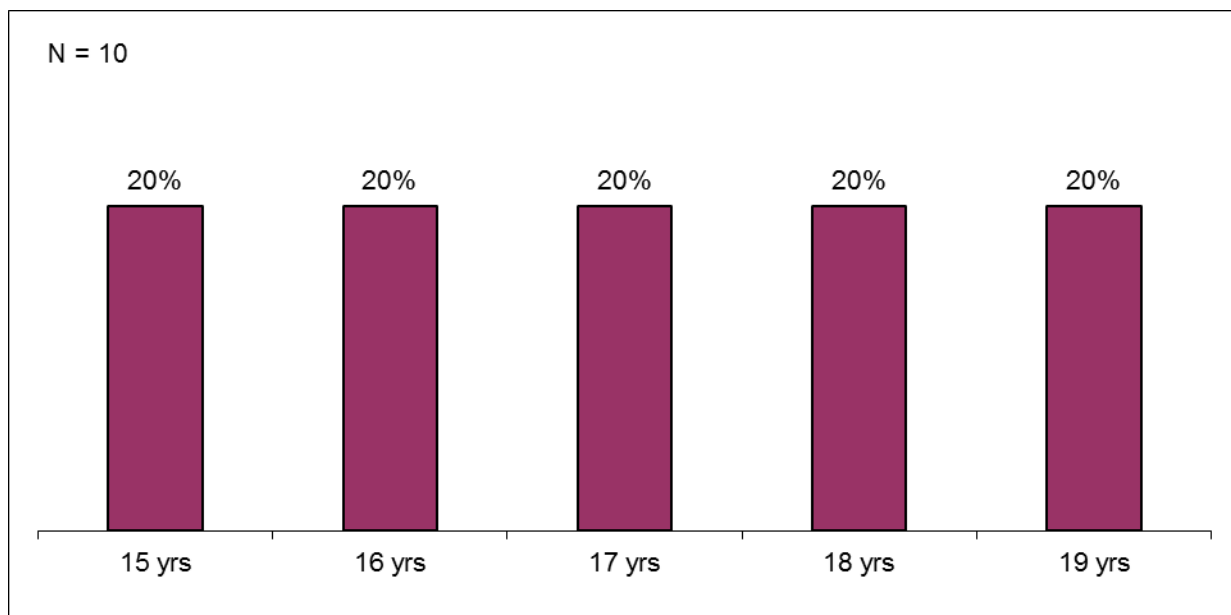
Program Description

Power of Peace is a succession of experiential workshops, with a focus on conflict resolution and anti-violence, designed to enable young people to use their voices to express their concerns, fears and dreams within a safe environment. The workshops address the issues that youth confront daily, the components of which include: positive youth development, leadership, conflict resolution, team work and collaboration, decision making, respect for others and self, and diversity.

Demographics

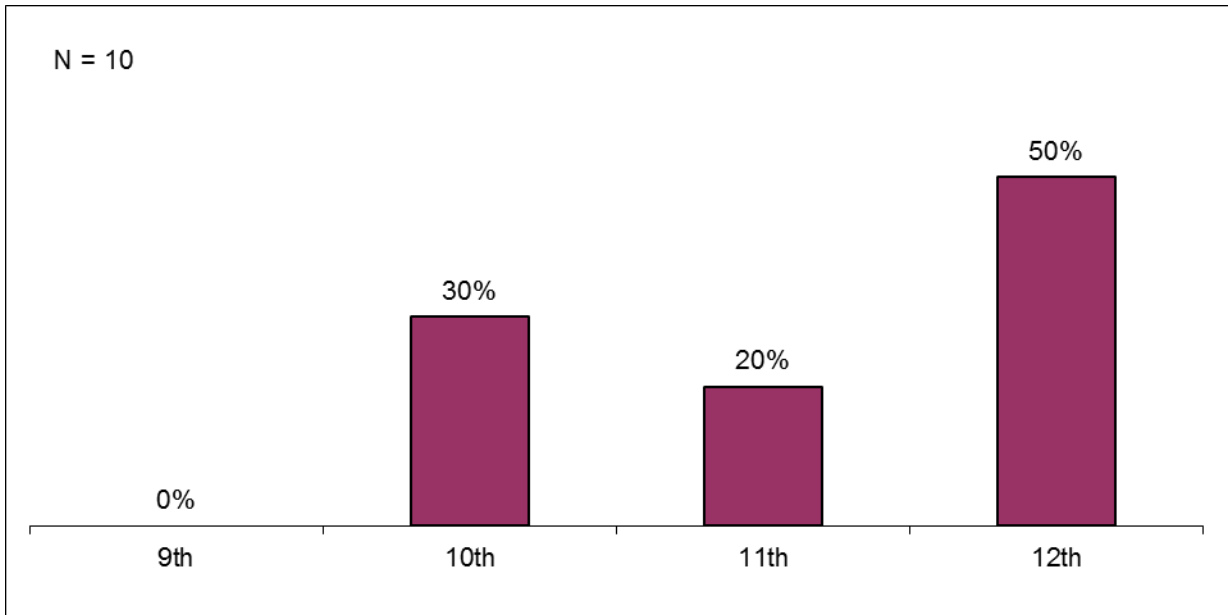
There were 10 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 7 boys (70%) and 3 girls (30%) in grades 10 through 12 and ranging in age from 15 – 19. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



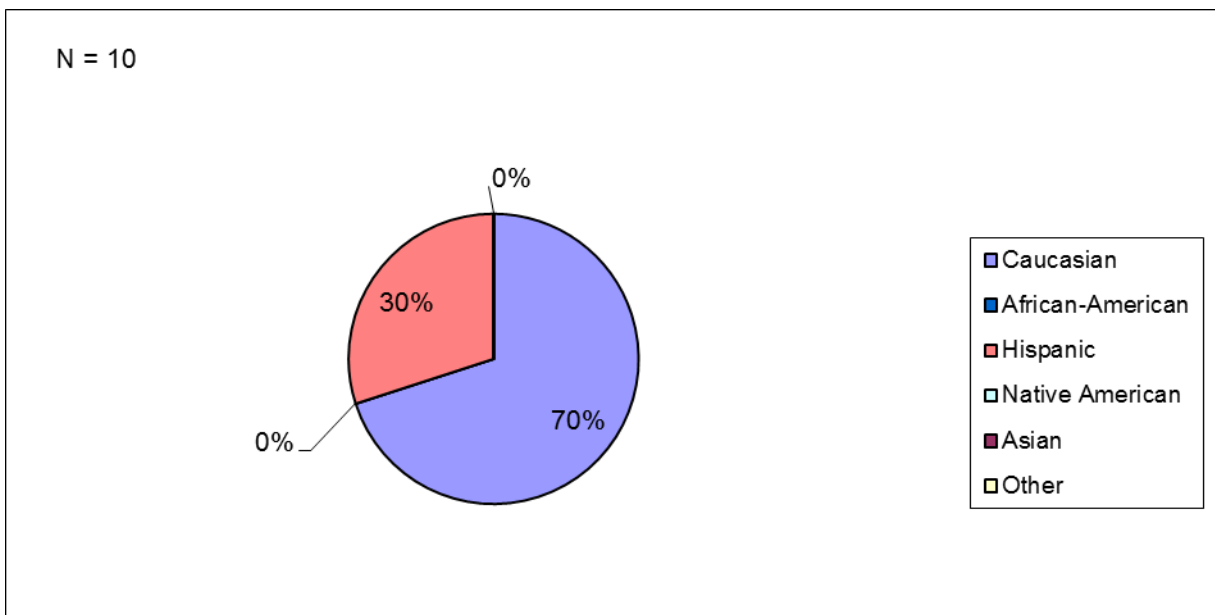
The age groups were evenly distributed..

Grade



Half (50%) of participants were in the 12th grade.

Ethnicity



Just over two thirds (70%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Caucasian, followed by just under one third who identified their ethnicity as Hispanic (30%).

Program Evaluation

A six statement pre-survey and a seven statement post-survey, designed by Creative Solutions Consultation Services, LLC, were administered to assess the effectiveness of the program. Students were asked to complete the pre-survey prior to the start of the first workshop and asked to complete the post-survey at the end of the second workshop. Of the 10 participants, 100% completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey.

Quantitative: Responses to statements were on a five point likert scale ranging from 5 = “Yes, definitely,” 4 = “Mostly,” 3 = “Sometimes,” 2 = “Not Really,” to 1 = “No, Never.”

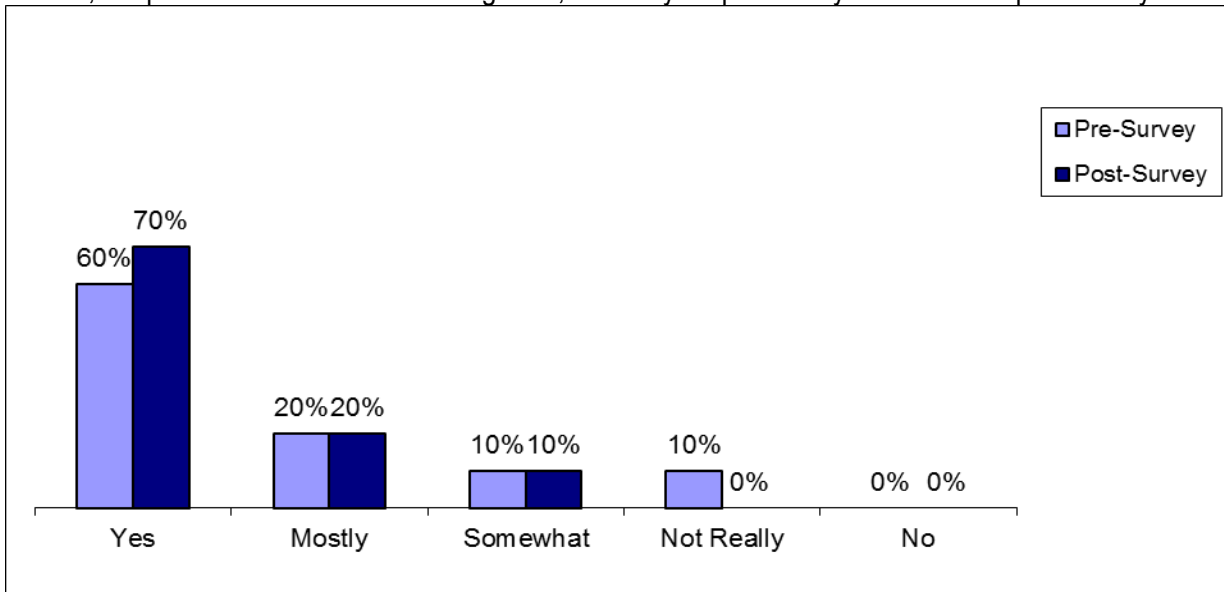
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, positive changes in attitudes were seen on four of the six items. Data were unable to be analyzed using t-tests to compare pre-survey responses with post-survey responses due to the small N = 10.

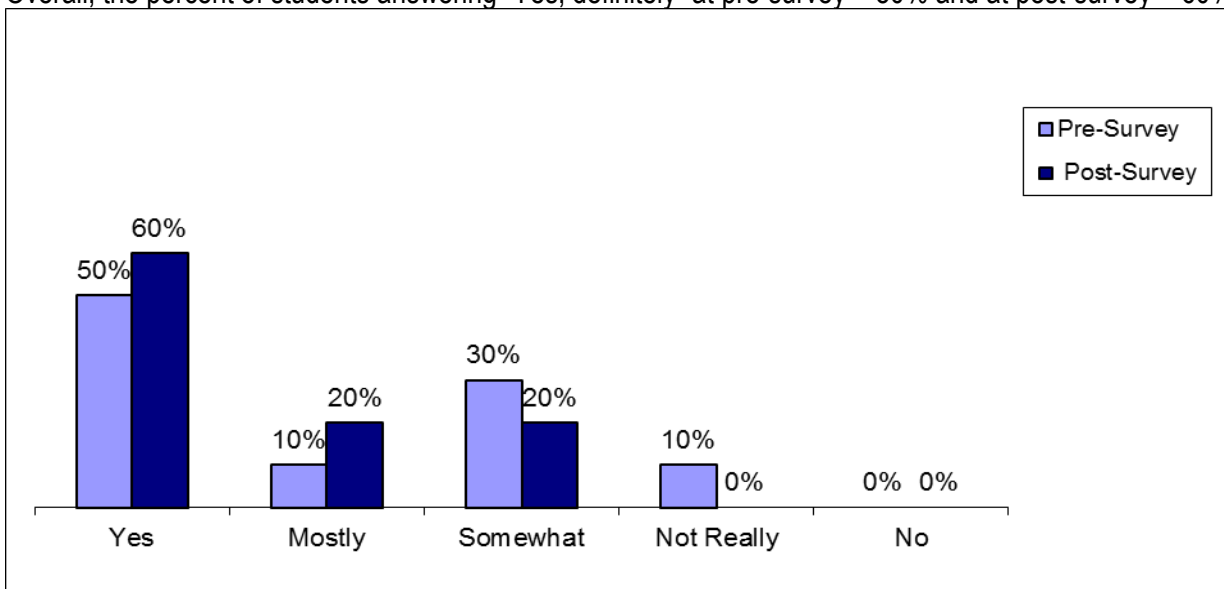
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 60% and at post-survey = 70%.



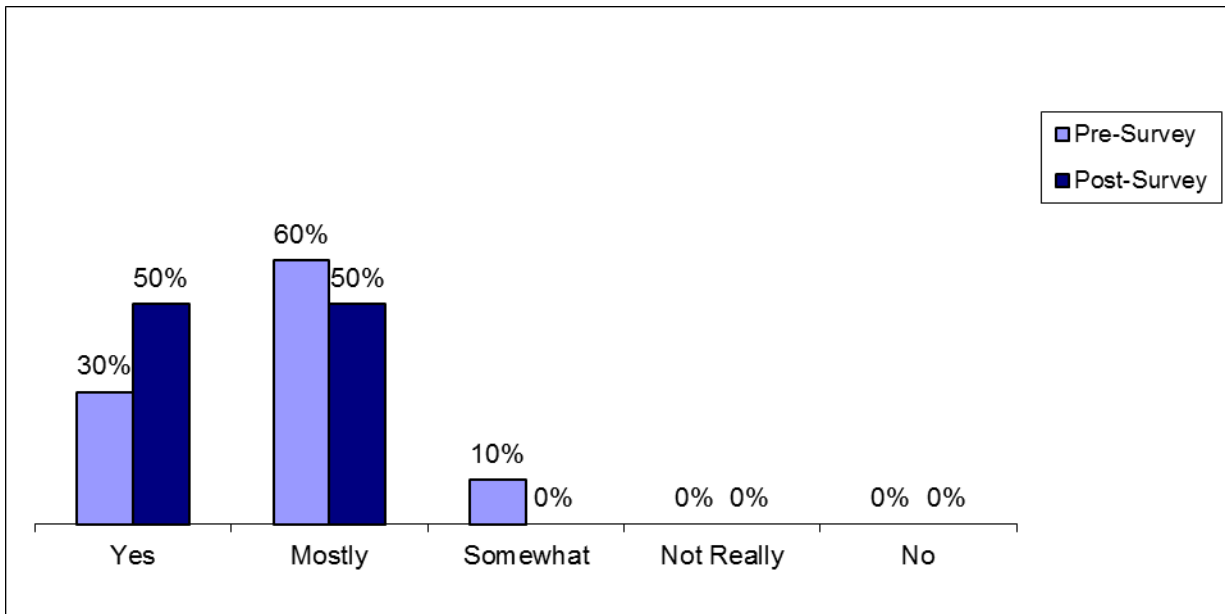
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 50% and at post-survey = 60%.



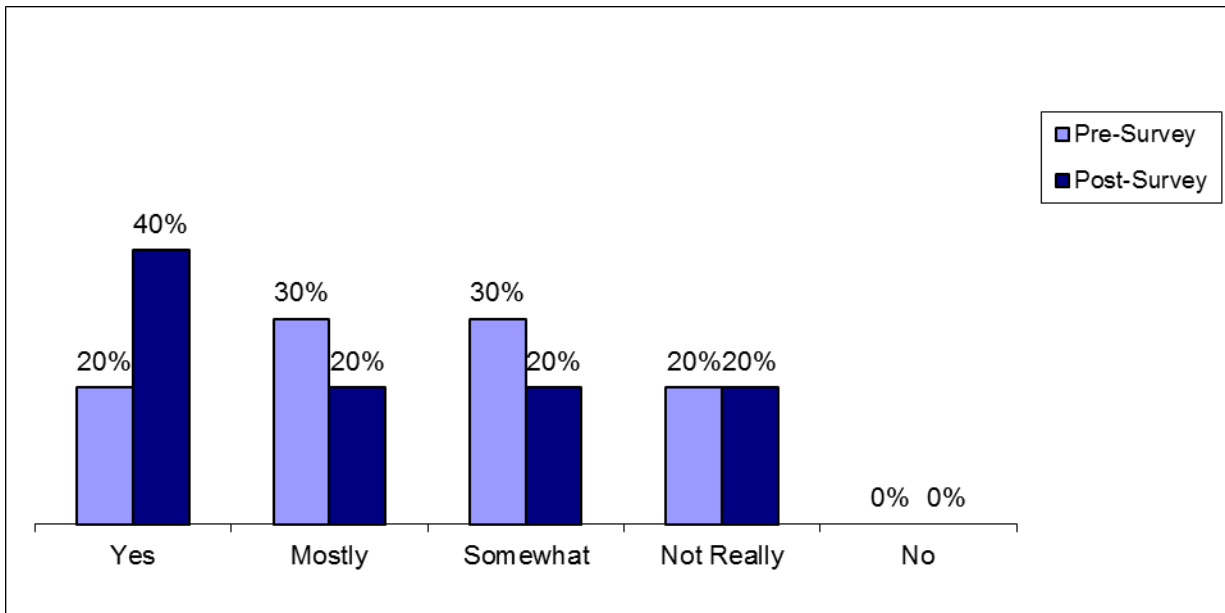
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 30% and at post-survey = 50%.



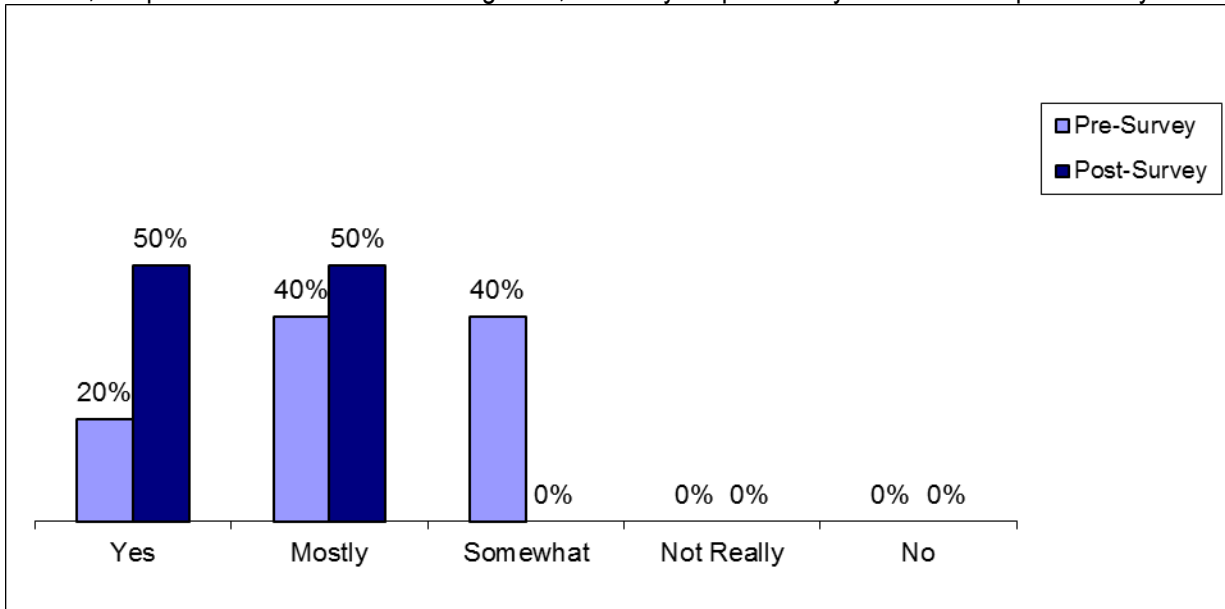
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 20% and at post-survey = 40%.



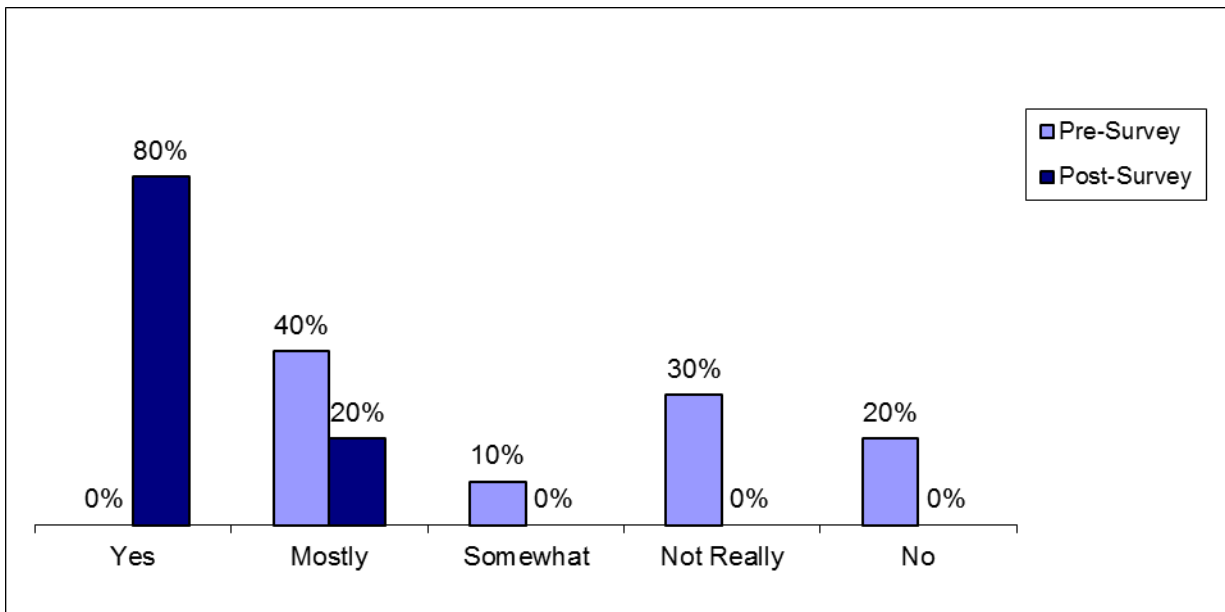
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 20% and at post-survey = 50%.



Item 6: I think I know how other people see me.

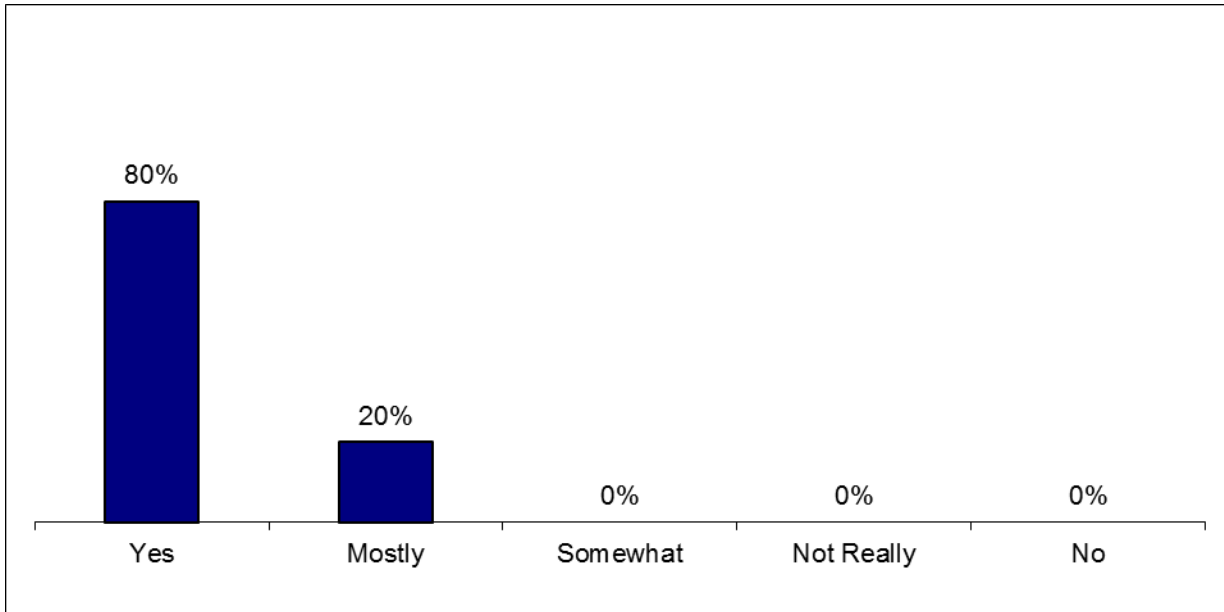
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 0% and at post-survey = 80%.



In addition to the six previous items listed, the three items listed below were included in the post-survey.

Item 7: I think it's a good idea for other students in my school to attend the Power of Peace workshops.

The vast majority, 80% of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



Item 8: Please tell us how you feel about Power of Peace

Of the ten students who completed the post-survey, 100% of them took the time to comment on how that felt about the Power of Peace experience. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. Adjectives used to describe the Power of Peace program in response to this survey item include positive and genuine, uplifting, impactful, inspiring, life changing, a gift, and interesting.

Quotes from participants include:

- *I believe it gave me a better outlook on life*
- *I'm glad it exists because it helped me a lot*
- *It helped me see a lot of different perspectives*
- *I believe it provided students with a safe place to express their feelings*
- *I loved it and could finally understand people*
- *This experience should only enhance the school experience, both inside and out*
- *It gives us opportunities to release somethings we hold on to and we get to know other people's stories*
- *I really liked when we talked to each other and gave our views*
- *Many students have things that they need to get out and talk about and I think they now see the importance of it (Adult participant)*

Item 9: Please tell us what we could do to improve Power of Peace

Of the ten students who completed the post-survey, 100% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority of the respondents indicated that they could think of nothing that would improve the Power of Peace program. Among the comments suggesting ways to improve the program the following were listed:

- Visit more
- More talking to each other and more games
- All high schoolers should experience

Discussion

The one statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 6: I think I know how other people see me (an increase of 80%). There were two statements indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey: Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 10%), and Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me (an increase of 10%).

Conclusion

The results presented in this report indicate that the Power of Peace program did have a positive effect in changing student attitudes in from pre-survey to post-survey. These results are primarily limited by the fact that this was not an empirical study. Without follow up measures, it is impossible to know the extent to which any attitudinal changes will be sustained.